

They told me yesterday, the representatives, that they had no thought that it would pass. They're trying to decide what their best negotiating position is. I made an argument that their best negotiating position ought to be to say what they thought was wrong with our bill, because almost all of them—not all of them, but almost all of them—favor guaranteed private insurance for everyone to stop the cost shifting to them. Most big businesses have paid higher premiums than they should have because of the cost shifting. And since they all cover their employees, most of them favor some form of universal coverage.

And so I argued that if that was really their position, their best policy ought to be to give a laundry list of everything they thought was wrong with our bill and that that was an appropriate thing, but they'll have to make their own decision about what they want to do.

**Q.** Can you convince them?

**The President.** I don't have any idea. I only talked to a handful of them, so I didn't have a shot at most of them.

### **President's Health**

**Q.** How are you feeling?

**The President.** Good. It's getting better.

**Q.** Are you going to do mostly listening or talking?

**The President.** What do you think? I never learned anything talking in my life. [Laughter]

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:13 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

### **Remarks to the Department of Labor Conference on Reemployment February 2, 1994**

First of all, let me thank all of you for being willing to be a part of this program today, and all of you who are here. And let me thank whoever set the microphone up for my hoarse voice. I presume you can hear it out there, even in its depleted condition.

Before I became President, I worked, incidentally, with some of the people in this audience today as a Governor for a dozen years on a lot of these kinds of programs which

we know work. And we did an awful lot of work in my home State to try to help customize programs to meet the needs of not only the people who were losing their jobs but also to fit them to the economy that existed and the economy that was emerging in our State and to try at the same time to shape the economy so that there would be opportunities for people who were willing to go through the retraining programs. Nonetheless, I always had this frustration that there were a lot of people who were succeeding because they were good people, and there were good people running these programs and they were making them work sometimes against all the odds, but I never had the feeling that there was a system established in our country that made any real sense for the economy that exists today and the one that's going forward.

Now, Secretary Reich and I were talking on the way over here, and I had already reviewed all the materials on this conference, about the morning session focusing on what's wrong with the present system and the second session talking about things that work. We obviously have some real success stories here, and what I would like to do is to maybe just ask some of the panelists to talk a little bit about their own experiences and then to try to identify whatever was in their experience that ought to be part of a national program, that ought to be part of—in other words, every program with Federal money in it everywhere. That's really what we mean by national program because there's not a national economy in that sense.

I mean, the economy is different, and the pool of people and what their needs are is different in every place. But it seems to me there ought to be some common elements to these programs. So that's kind of what I hope will come out of this, and I hope that all of you who are out here will also be thinking of that. We have to shape in this year legislation that will, to use our common phrase that the Vice President's given us, reinvent the way we provide these training opportunities in the hope that we can create more success stories.

There are other things we have to do, too. And I'll say more about that at the end of the program. But that is what I'd like to focus

on, because we have to make some hard decisions in the next 30 to 45 days about what ought to be in these programs, what we can fund, and what we can't. Inevitably we'll come up against budgetary constraints, and there will be some things we'll be able to do and some things we won't. So, I'd like to start by asking each of you to talk maybe in a little more detail about your personal experiences. And then if you can say in your own words what you think ought to be in every program in every State that affects someone like you, I hope you will do that.

*[At this point, the President participated in a panel discussion with formerly displaced workers and the people whose programs helped them to find jobs, and his remarks were not released by the Office of the Press Secretary. The President then made the following concluding remarks.]*

Let me wrap up by just making a couple of observations. First of all, to thank all those panelists who were here, the ones on my panel and the ones who were here earlier and all of you for coming.

What we are trying to do in our administration with the leadership of the Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of Education and many others is to establish a system of life-long learning, to recognize that people are going to change work seven or eight times in a lifetime, that even if you're fortunate enough to have your employer able to keep you with the same company for a lifetime, doing that will require continuous changing skills.

The way we do things will be different tomorrow than the way we did things today. You heard Father Cunningham talking about making a clean car. Well, being a bank teller is a very different job today than it was 5 years ago, too. Working in most hospital jobs are different today than it was 5 years ago. Things are changing rapidly, and they will continue to.

We have some major pieces of legislation: Our Goals 2000 bill, which affects the way public schools operate and tries to give them some international standards against which to measure their own efforts; a school-to-work initiative which tries to recognize that a lot of young people don't go to college but

do need the kinds of skills that we've been talking about today. And we are going to propose transforming the whole unemployment system to try to deal with some of the problems you heard about today, to make it a continuous reemployment system so that there is at least no delay from the time a person stops getting a paycheck until a person starts into a retraining program, because we know that the old jobs don't come back anymore. And we're going to try to do it in a way that will give enormous incentives to support programs at the local level that get rid of bureaucracy and that aren't all divided up, not only consolidating the training programs but, with these one-stop centers, making sure that nobody who loses a job is left to the chance of whether some coworker says, "Well, here's a program that might work," and that no one on welfare wanders out of the welfare office and has to depend on the luck of someone else saying, "Here's something that will help you turn your life around." It seems to me that we have to do that.

The second thing we have to do, to follow up on what Linda said, is to reward programs that produce results and to make it absolutely clear that those results are what matter, that in the end, that the job training programs have to lead to work or they don't work.

Later this month we will introduce the "Reemployment Act of 1994" which will, hopefully, contain the wisdom that all of you have imparted to us today. And I hope you will help us to pass it. In a time in which we have to cut domestic spending, we have to find more money to spend on this. And I am presenting a budget to the Congress on Monday which will eliminate completely 100 Government programs and cut back over 300 others, so that we can squeeze the money out of this budget to put more money into people to get jobs in the private sector where the future of the country is.

And again, I will say that I hope all of you will support that, because we've got a lot of yesterday's programs in the Government, too, and we're just kidding ourselves if we just keep spending money on things that don't really move the whole economy forward, don't create more jobs, don't give people a different and a better future.

We know right now from what you've told us that we have to consolidate all these different programs for laid-off workers. And again, it won't be easy because there will be people, good people in the Congress who will say, "Well, there was reason we had this separate program. There were people we were trying to help."

We've got to learn to trust people like Father Cunningham and Linda Butler, and other people at the grassroots level who are producing jobs. We have to consolidate the programs in law and let them diversify, in fact, where it makes sense, out in the country. Instead of that, we had the reverse. We have diversified the programs in law so that they can't have any impact out there in the country. So I hope you will help us to do that.

The bill will create one-stop shopping centers, and it will create incentives to put the consumer first and to try to bring the business community into this so that employers, even when they don't have to, will want to give their workers more notice. Working people in this country are grownups. They understand the global economy. They know what is happening, and they deserve the right to control their destiny in a better way. And so we will try to engage the employer community in that and the labor community in that. And I'm very hopeful that we can.

And finally, we're working hard to get as much money as we can to make this training long-term, to have enough time to meet the needs of people, and to meet the needs of our future economy. And I have learned some very specific things today that we're going to go back and try to make sure we've got in that bill as well as in the welfare reform bill. Three years from now, I never want to hear another Cynthia Scott story like that again. The welfare office ought to be the work office; it ought to be the job training office; it ought to be the place where you can be a successful worker and a successful parent.

So, I thank you all for coming. I thank you for your contributions. I want to say a little about my friend of 25 years, our Labor Secretary. I think he's done a wonderful job because he cares about people like you, and we're trying to be relevant to your future.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:45 p.m. in the Blue Room at the Omni Shoreham Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to the following panel participants: Rev. William Cunningham, executive director, Focus: HOPE, Detroit, MI; Linda Lyons Butler, job placement specialist, Tradeswomen of Philadelphia/Women in Non-Traditional Jobs (WIN/TOP), Philadelphia, PA; and Cynthia Scott, participant, Project QUEST, San Antonio, TX.

### **Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on Railroad Safety**

*February 2, 1994*

*To the Congress of the United States:*

I transmit herewith the 1992 annual report on the Administration of the Federal Railroad Safety Act of 1970, pursuant to section 211 of the Act (45 U.S.C. 440(a)).

**William J. Clinton**

The White House,  
February 2, 1994.

### **Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund**

*February 2, 1994*

*Dear Mr. Chairman:*

I transmit herewith the first annual report on the status of the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund as required by section 330 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1992 (Public Law 102-580). This report covers the history of the Trust Fund from its inception in 1987 through fiscal year 1992.

The Harbor Maintenance Fee and Trust Fund program now provides 100 percent of the operations and maintenance expenditures for those activities of the St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation and the Army Corps of Engineers, which benefit commercial navigation. In fiscal year 1992, nearly \$500 million was appropriated from the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund for such purposes. This report provides an evaluation of the Trust Fund, including its administration, use, and prospects for the future.